



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA's ALVAREZ TO GIVE AWARDS, HOST ROUNDTABLE DURING TECHNOLOGY MEETING IN NATION'S CAPITAL

WASHINGTON -- The head of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Aida Alvarez, later today will present the SBA's Tibbetts Award to small businesses at a national conference in Washington, D.C. The Tibbetts Award is SBA's annual recognition given to 'models of technology excellence.' The Administrator will also host a roundtable on how small businesses can play an even bigger role in federal research and development programs.

The award will be presented to 62 companies and individuals involved with the SBA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program. SBIR currently accounts for more than \$1 billion per year in federal research and development funds, resulting in what some studies say is among the most highly regarded government research available. Often, these SBIR innovations find their way into the commercial market, giving the general public access to a range of new products and services.

"As I read through the list of accomplishments, I'm impressed with the diversity and ingenuity shown by each of these award recipients," said Administrator Alvarez. **"There are projects dealing with computer-based speech transcription, submarine tracking, and even genetic research. This is the creativity of the small business community at its best and it's this creativity that will help our nation maintain technological superiority well into the 21st century."**

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Among the firms being honored is **Millitech Corporation** of South Deerfield, Mass. The firm used SBA SBIR funding to develop a contraband detection system using digital imaging, which can identify concealed objects such as metallic and non-metallic weapons, plastic explosives and drugs. The system, while now marketed by a spin-off company, Millimetrix, is being offered to airports, banks and government buildings.

In another SBA SBIR success story, **Kelly Space and Technology, Inc.**, of San Bernardino, Calif., uses a patented 'Tow Launch Technology' for placing satellites into low earth orbit. This low-cost launching system may reduce current payload fees by as much as 80 percent. The company is well into a testing program and plans to have it operational by mid-2002.

Among the individual winners is **Dwight Carlson** of Farmington, Mich., who has been associated with many of the nation's leading technology and manufacturing organizations and is a strong proponent of the SBA SBIR program. His company, Perceptron, is involved with 3-D machine vision systems, otherwise known as 'eyes for robots.'

The SBA award, introduced two years ago, is named for Roland Tibbetts, a former National Science Foundation associate who was instrumental in creating SBA's SBIR program. Firms competing for the award were judged based on the economic impact of their technological innovations and overall business achievements.

Studies reveal that small firms account for just 18 percent of the nation's industrial research and development work force, yet produce 55 percent of this country's product innovations. The 16-year-old SBIR program is administered by the SBA, which coordinates the program on behalf of 10 participating federal agencies.

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State-by-state listing
1998 Tibbetts Award Winners
U.S. Small Business Administration

Charles Christy
Alaska Technology Transfer Center
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9518 Todd Mill Rd.
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Fort Collins, CO 80526

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New Haven, CT 6511

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Architecture Technology Corporation
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Eden Prairie, MN 55344

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Brewer Science, Inc.
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